

Advocate's Voice

February 2009

Well, here we are again facing one of the certainties of life - taxes. But your friendly and efficient IRS-trained tax counselors from AARP Tax-Aide are anxious to make it as painless as possible. Remember that this service is for low to moderate income taxpayers. The service is free and confidential, no appointment necessary and is available from February 1 through April 15. The day and time location schedule is printed on page 3 in this Bulletin.

Bilingual help is available at Windy Hill and C. Freeman Poole. Any questions regarding your stimulus check or lack thereof or the amount received and how to report it will be answered at your tax consultation. The AARP tax aides have a direct line to IRS to use to get your personal information in this regard.

We see what is going on around us. On one hand we are pumped with chemicals to keep us alive or maybe just to become the living embalmed generation. On the other hand now that we are in need of services from the government, which we have paid for all our working years, there seems to be no thought given to us, only to monetary figures and percentages. For the powers that be a pen, eraser or whiteout applied to a printed budget page solves their problem and we are left with the worry of how to make it through the next day.

Laws have been made to sensitize folks against sexual harassment, hate crimes and gender discrimination. In many cases for those who engage in such practices, there are classes to teach them what they did wrong and how to better manage such situations. I would like to see mandatory classes on compassion and empathy required for our political representatives. How can they truly represent us if they cannot empathize with us? This is obviously a problem. But we as seniors cannot continue to say what 'they' won't do and complain about budgets and services being cut without thinking what our responsibilities are. We don't want to volunteer to be victims and accept whatever is or isn't given to us.

We have to participate in our own welfare. There is no do-over in the ageing process. Even seniors don't really know first hand what it means to be 65, 75, or 85 until we are that age. But still we know more as we approach those years than 40 and 50 year olds who represent us whether in congress or in various county departments we count on to make life better for us. As is commonly said, a congressman's #1 job is to get reelected.

Seniors represent a large voting block in Cobb County and they have time to get involved in the political process. We can go to rallies and public hearings and commissioners' meetings to keep abreast of what's going on and most importantly spread the information throughout our communities. We can write letters and make phone calls and sign petitions on a regular basis voicing our needs and opinions. Remind them that you are a senior and you are watching them.

We must dispel the rumor that when the color leaves our hair, brain cells are sure to follow. When writing, remember that personal stories are more powerful than generic letters. And letters and phone calls should not be limited to complaints. Our representatives need to know when we feel they have done something positive for us or at least that they are going in the right direction

We all know the economy is bad and cuts have to be made, we just want to be part of the decision-making process. When all the dust has settled, we want to be survivors not victims.

Join your Advocacy Team - there is strength in numbers. We seniors are smart folks and have good ideas that must be shared. A successful society needs every citizen's help.

For more information call 770-528-1446 and leave a message if no one is in the office. We will get back to you.